



The City of West University Place

A Neighborhood City

CITY COUNCIL

Bob Higley, Mayor
Kevin Trautner, Mayor Pro Tem
John P. Barnes, Councilmember
Lauri Lankford, Councilmember
Ed Sobash, Councilmember

STAFF

David J. Beach, City Manager
Alan Petrov, City Attorney
Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary

CITY COUNCIL ACTION MINUTES

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, met in regular session via teleconference due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health threat on **Monday, May 11, 2020**, at **6:30 p.m.** in the Bill Watson Conference Room in the Municipal Building, 3800 University, West University Place.

Agenda items were as follows:

1. Call Regular Meeting to Order

Mayor Higley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilmember Sobash, City Manager Beach, City Secretary Gilliam, Police Chief Walker, IT Director Dang and HR Director Urban were present.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner, Councilmembers Barnes and Lankford, City Attorney Petrov, Fire Chief/Emergency Management Coordinator Taylor and Public Works Director Barrera attended via teleconference.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Sobash led the Pledge.

3. Public Works Week Proclamation

Matters related to a Proclamation proclaiming May 17-23, 2020 as Public Works Week. *Recommended Action: Proclaim May 17-23, 2020 as Public Works Week in the City of West University Place. **Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director***

Mayor Higley read the Proclamation designating May 17-23, 2020 as Public Works Week in West University Place.

4. Public Comments

This was an opportunity for citizens to speak to City Council relating to agenda and non-agenda items.

There were no public comments.

5. Harris ERP Support and Maintenance

Matters related to a contract with Harris ERP for support and maintenance of computer software. *Recommended Action: Approve contract with Harris ERP. **Mr. Tim Dang, IT Director***

Mr. Dang presented and stated that the City has been using Enterprise, a Harris ERP software, since 2008 and that the proposed maintenance and support contract allows for up-to-date features and security.

Councilmember Barnes asked if this contract is subject to the City's standards because he doesn't see anything in this one relating to venue or jurisdiction in case of a dispute. He said his concern is that Harris ERP is located out of state so if there is a dispute it might have to be litigated outside of Harris County, Texas. City Attorney Petrov confirmed that Councilmember Barnes' concern is legitimate.

City Manager Beach responded that this is not a typical contract but rather a one-year support and maintenance contract.

Councilmember Sobash asked whether the City is requesting the upgrade functionality or if Harris ERP is pushing for it. IT Director Dang said the City is requesting the upgrade for continued maintenance and support.

City Manager Beach said in the future staff will negotiate a longer term contract and request approval for funding during the budget process.

Councilmember Sobash asked if a better price could be negotiated with a longer contract. IT Director Dang said yes.

Councilmember Sobash moved to accept this contract for Harris ERP to support the maintenance of computer software as recommended by staff. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash
Noes: None
Absent: None

Before going to the next Agenda item, Councilmember Lankford asked if the blue ribbon idea to support employees that was discussed during the last council meeting is something that would be done during Public Works Week. Councilmember Barnes said he spoke with Orval Marlow, Chair of the Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board (RSWRB), because it is tied to a lot of what Public Works does. He continued to say that Mr. Marlow and Public Works Director Barrera will be in communications to flush out a proposal that will be targeted to launch during Public Works Week.

Councilmember Sobash interjected to say that he is uncomfortable discussing this now and thinks discussion should be held under Item 6. Councilmember Lankford said it relates to Agenda Item 3 and that she did not bring it up at that time due to Councilmember Barnes and Public Works Director Barrera not being on the line and/or having technical difficulties during the reading of the Public Works Proclamation.

City Attorney Petrov said because discussion was related to an item on the agenda, Council was okay to discuss at this time.

6. Information and Updates related to COVID-19

Matters related to COVID-19. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action.* **Mr. Dave Beach, City Manager and Mr. Aaron Taylor, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator**

Fire Chief/EMC Taylor presented and reported the following:

- In Harris County there are currently 7,878 confirmed cases, 4,690 active cases, 3,016 recoveries, and 172 deaths.
- There are 15 confirmed case in West U (no data on recoveries)

- There are 15 PUI's (Persons Under Investigation) by the Harris County Public Health
- The City's EOC remains at Level 2 (limited activation) and staff continues to hold weekly EOC meetings to coordinate plans and efforts between departments.
- All full-time City employees are continuing to work alternative staffing modules at least through May 18.
- Between May 18 and June 1 City staff will begin the transition to a normal schedule based on the need of each department. Currently, the goal is to have all full-time employees back in the office and working normal schedules by June 1 with continued social distancing and enhanced cleaning procedures encouraged and enforced.
- All employees reporting to work will continue to go through temperature screening and screening for symptoms.
- The current plan is for all City facilities to remain closed to the public until June 1 with the exception of the lobby in the Police Department.
- Beginning June 1 the plan is for City Hall and Public Works Admin Building to open to the public utilizing enhanced safety precautions such as sneeze guards and social distancing markers.
- The West U Rec Center is planning for a modified opening on June 1.
- Public Works is currently working to install safety barriers at customer service points throughout the City and should have them in place by June 1.
- Judge Hidalgo's Order is set to expire on May 21, which currently prohibits playgrounds and park features. Once it is expired local decisions can be made regarding playgrounds, etc., though the CDC recommends that playgrounds continue to be closed.
- Staff has obtained quotes to rent construction fencing in Judson Park, Whitt Johnson Park and Weir Park to allow for green space for residents to utilize. The quote for the rental agreement for all three parks is a total of \$1,500 per month.

In response to Mayor Higley's question as to how many confirmed deaths are there in West U as a result of COVID19, Chief Taylor responded that staff is not aware of any at this time.

Councilmember Sobash asked if there have been any cases with employees. HR Director Urban stated that there have been some employees that have either come in contact with people a couple people that may have been concerned and maybe have had and have to be quarantined and may have one employee that tested positive. Kept practical safeguards in place. Councilmember Sobash said he assumes that the person that had questionable results is quarantined to which HR Urban replied yes.

Councilmember Barnes asked when City Hall and PW Building reopens will it be encouraged that visitors wear masks. Chief Taylor said yes, it will be highly encouraged. He said other safety precautions will also be in place.

Councilmember Sobash said if the County Order expires on May 21 and not be extended, does it fall on the City as to how to proceed with reopening the parks and if so has staff developed a plan on how to do it. Fire Chief Taylor responded that as of right now there is no guidance from CDC or otherwise on how to safely open playground equipment to the public nor has a plan been developed on the local level.

City Manager Beach said regardless of whether the County Order expires on the 21st allowing residents use of playground equipment will continue to be reevaluated and phased in when appropriate.

Lauri asked if staff has made the decision on the fencing option or if it's still being considered. City Manager Beach said it's still being considered.

With the exception of swimming pools, Mayor Higley proposed opening green space as quickly as possible with a fencing around the “kiddie-friendly” park equipment. He said this way the parks are open while still protecting children.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner asked the city manager his plan for fencing the equipment in the parks. City Manager Beach said the plan is to fence off equipment in the parks with significant green space, which is Weir, Judson and Whitt Johnson parks. He said staff will look at the green space in the other parks to determine if barriers can be put up around playground equipment and still offer enough green space.

Councilmember Barnes suggested that when the parks are open consideration be given to propping open the gates so that no one has to touch them.

City Manager Beach said in a discussion with Parks and Recreation Director White he had mentioned this and her response was that parents prefer that the gates remain closed to keep the kids in the parks. He said staff might look into other alternatives (i.e. gates that will allow using feet to push them open or attach a feature to the gate that wouldn't necessitate use of the hands to open).

Councilmember Sobash said the Parks Board members are resident experts and asked if Council could ask the Parks Board for recommendations on how to proceed in opening the parks.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said he wonders if Council is making it more complicated than it is. He said City Manager Beach and Parks and Recreation Director White, along with other staff, can come up with a solution.

Mayor Higley said he likes the idea of going to the Parks Board for recommendations.

City Manager Beach said it would require time because the Parks Board's next meeting is June 3 unless a special meeting is called. Councilmember Sobash said he is not asking for a special meeting of the Parks Board.

City Manager Beach said if the goal is to get the green space re-opened, staff will have them opened in a timely matter with barriers installed and then go from there. He said after the Parks Board meeting in June staff can get feedback and make any necessary tweaks at that time.

7. Consent Agenda

All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

A. City Council Minutes

Approve the City Council Minutes of April 27, 2020.

Councilmember Lankford requested that “is neighbor” be changed to correctly read “his neighbor” under David Cole's public comment.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the noted correction. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash

Noes: None
Absent: None

8. Adjourn Regular Meeting

With no other matter before council, the meeting will adjourn.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ayes: Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash
Noes: None
Absent: None

Audio of this Council Meeting is available on the City's website or contact the City Secretary's office for a copy.

Prepared by: City Secretary Thelma A. Gilliam

Approved by City Council on: May 18, 2020